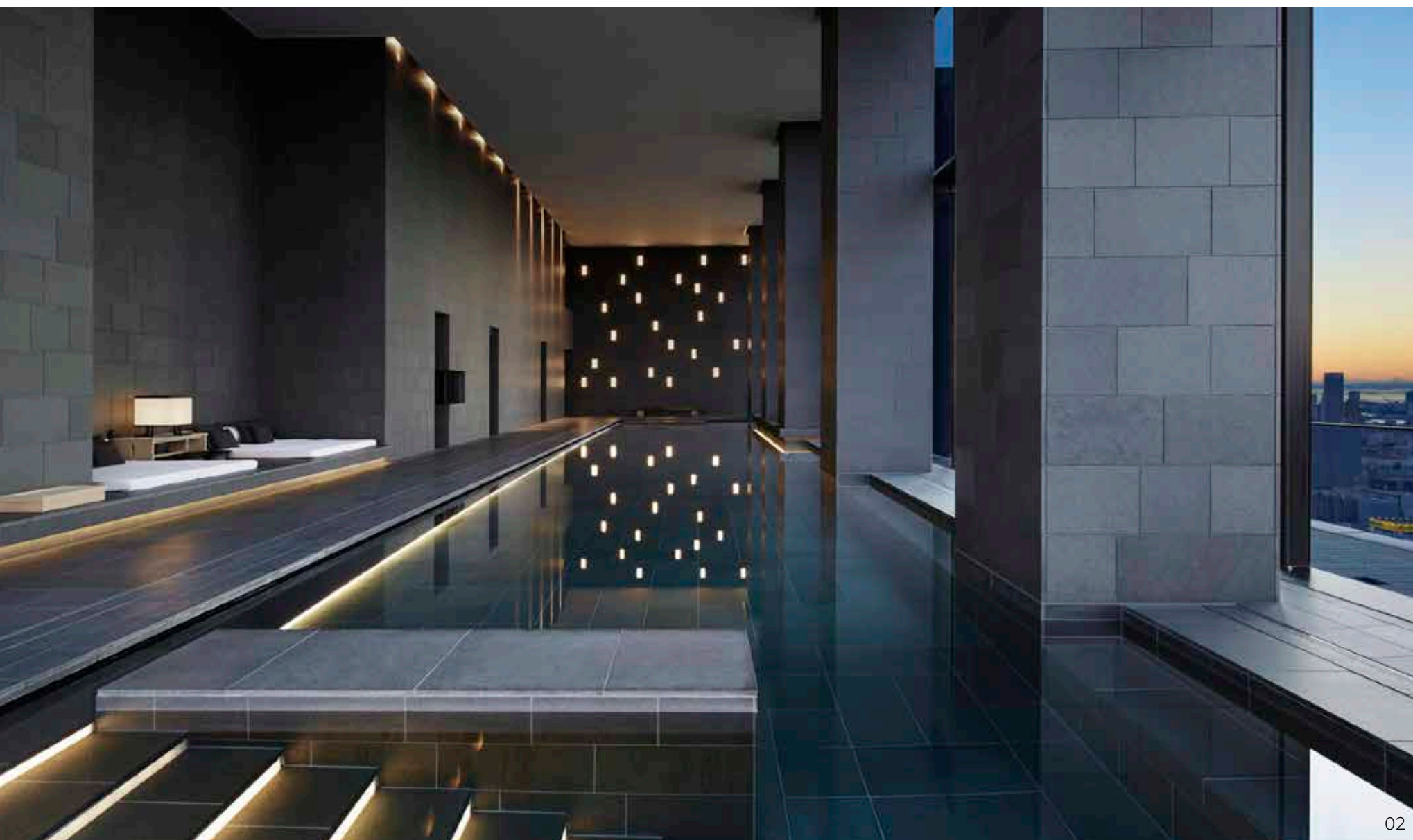




01

THE *BOLD* AND *The Beautiful*

Traditional one minute, futuristic the next, *Tokyo*'s whiplash of design styles is perhaps best personified in its luxury hotels, writes Natasha Dragun. Here, six of our favourites.



02



03

01 Glorious city views from a room at Aman Tokyo 02 The same hotel's scene-stealing rooftop pool 03 Zen gardens at Trunk (House) 04 Low-slung beds at exclusive Trunk (House)

Trunk (House)

At a glance The opulent sister to Trunk (Hotel), this exclusive abode comes with just a single suite. And what a stunner it is, deftly balancing old and new across two floors in a 70-year-old house where geisha were once trained.

On both levels you'll find tea lounges; a calming union of glistening *tatami* mats, wood and stone. Upstairs is the low-slung bed, topped with commissioned

art and complemented by niceties like leather slippers and a mini-bar stocked with traditional sweets, Japanese beers and organic green tea, which can be brewed 24/7 by your butler. The bathroom is a real hit: a toilet that plays relaxing Brian Eno notes when you enter, an enormous hinoki wood soaking tub, eco-conscious bamboo amenities and organic shampoos.

Location The setting is gorgeously residential, your abode tucked on a back alley in Kagurazaka. You're in the heart of Shinjuku here.

Best for You and your companions have the entire place to yourselves. This is social distancing at its finest.

Hot feature Downstairs, the classic Japanese garden cuts a calming form beside the House's most playful side: the self-proclaimed 'World's Smallest Disco'. Here, staff serve cocktails while you sing karaoke in a tiny white-cocooned haven with an illuminated dance floor. Just try not to have fun.

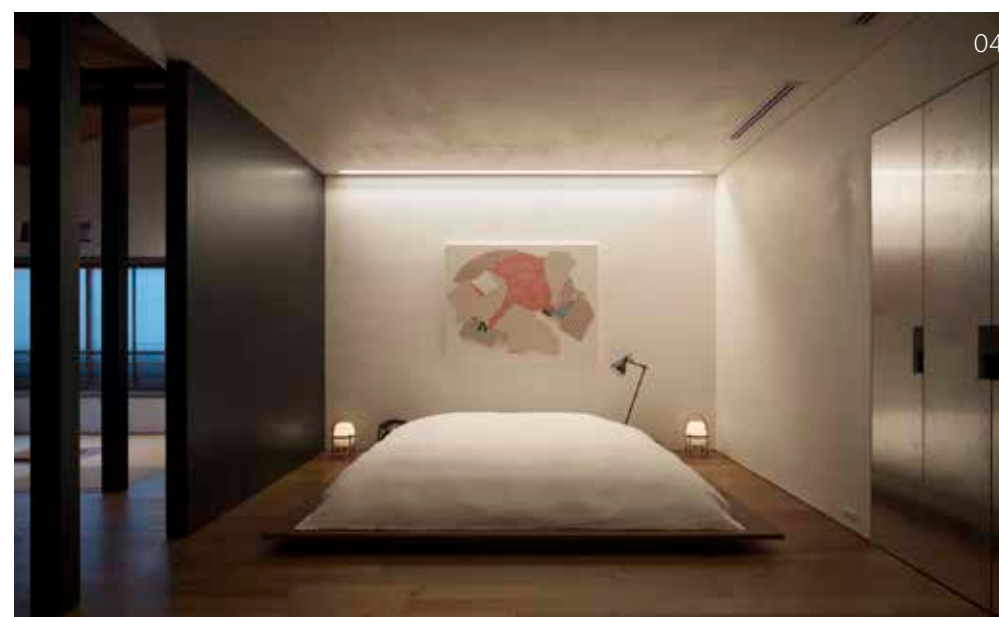
Aman Tokyo

At a glance From the moment you step into the 33rd-floor lobby at this hotel you're overwhelmed with tradition, the atrium resembling a larger-than-life lantern replete with an inner rock and water garden where kimono-clad staff pour tea. Age-old materials are used throughout, from sliding *shoji* screens to *furo* soaking tubs and elegant *yukata* robes in the wardrobe. Still, it's the views that dazzle most, with rooms and suites overlooking the Imperial Palace gardens and Tokyo Skytree.

Location In Tokyo's financial district, but within easy reach of calm, found in the Imperial Gardens.

Best for Wellness is a focus here, and the spa offers treatments that provide a modern spin on ancient Japanese rituals; they also incorporate products infused with native herbs.

Hot feature The height of the water in the rooftop pool is at a level that blocks out much of Tokyo's cityscape, allowing bathers to bliss out in a watery cocoon while gazing at Mount Fuji.



04

The Peninsula Tokyo

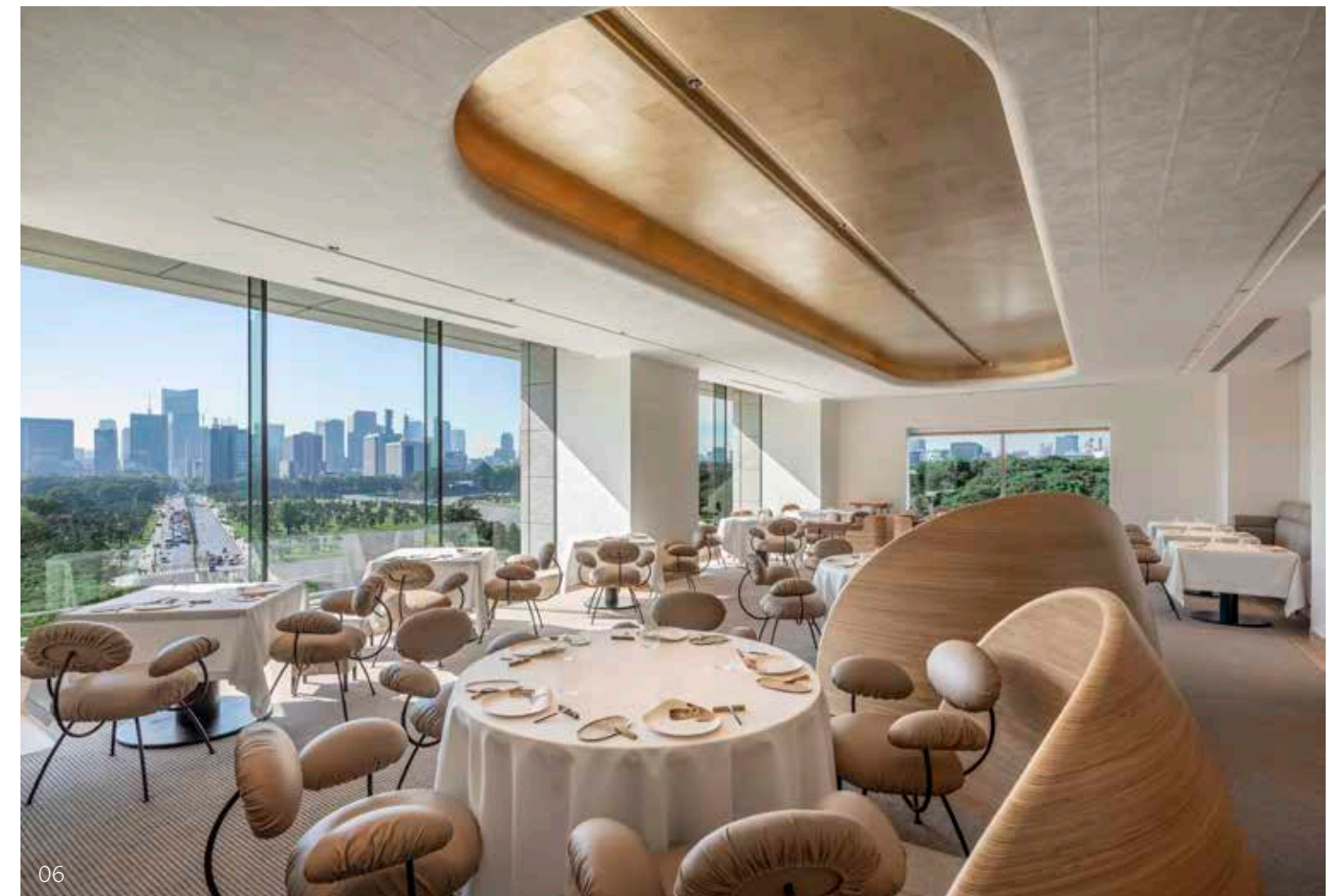
At a glance The rose-tinted tower that houses this ravishing hotel was designed to resemble a Japanese lantern. There's eye candy from top to toe: in the rooftop bar, cocktails are enjoyed overlooking the Imperial Palace in a room decked out with glass cherry blossom 'trees'. Enter the lobby, meanwhile, to be welcomed by dapper bellboys and a space overhung with a suspended chandelier made from 1,313 bulbs.

Location Minutes walk from the lush Imperial Palace gardens as well as the busy streets of Ginza.

Best for Classic luxury – nothing is spared, from the moment you're collected in the house Rolls-Royce.

Hot feature Immersive cultural tours. Want to learn how sake is made, or see kimono artists in action?

05



06

05 The dramatic art-filled lobby at the Peninsula Tokyo 06 The Palace Hotel is known for its exceptional restaurants and bars

Palace Hotel

At a glance This grande dame opened her doors in 1961; the property was razed in 2009 and then reopened in 2013, with many of the original flourishes retained. Like the white grand piano in the moat-side Palace Lounge; the marbled countertops in the Grand Kitchen; and the Royal Bar, with its mahogany bar and velvet armchairs. It's been thoroughly modernised, however, with welcome touches including 720 works of contemporary art. Rooms are a shrine to Japanese design: the high-thread-count linens come courtesy of Imabari; there are Maruyama Nori teas;

and *washi* lanterns cast a romantic glow. A deep, window-side tub in the bathroom is complemented by Anne Semonin amenities from France, one of the few foreign influences.

Location You can't get any closer to the imperial moat than this; it's also an easy walk to Marunouchi's top restaurants.

Best for If you're after an epic meal, the eateries at this stunner deliver – Alain Ducasse has a fine diner here.

Hot feature The Evian spa is a highlight, only the second of its kind in the world and sister to the original Evian Resort in Switzerland.

Hotel Gajoen Tokyo

At a glance This gracious hotel doesn't do itself justice when proclaiming to be a 'museum of Japanese beauty'. It's that, but much more. The library and gallery are filled with antiquities from the 1920s onwards. As are guest rooms and public spaces, with works spanning paintings and lacquerwork, ornate woodwork and installations – it's such a focus that guests can book 'art yoga' classes, or attend a *matcha* tea ceremony replete with contemporary *omotenashi* (that untranslatable word that embodies intuitively perfect service). You'll want to linger in rooms, most of which come with private saunas, Jacuzzis and views over the blossom-lined river.

Location Calm and quiet, the setting feels peaceful and quiet. There are parks and gardens on your doorstep in Meguro, but it's still easy to access theatres, restaurants and shops in central Tokyo.

Best for Art, art and more art.

Hot feature This place feels like a horticultural retreat, designed with immaculately manicured Zen gardens that unite waterfalls and bridges, koi ponds and leafy reading nooks.



07



09

07 Beds appear to 'float' in rooms at Hotel Gajoen 08 Hotel Gajoen is like a shrine to Japanese art 09 Fine dining at Hoshinoya Tokyo 10 Embracing tradition at the same hotel

Hoshinoya Tokyo

At a glance The Hoshino group's debut city *ryokan* – set in an 18-storey skyscraper clad in a grid motif resembling a kimono – steals the scene. Each floor comes with its own lounge, where you can sip seasonal *sake* and tea while nibbling *onigiri* rice balls. Slip away to your room and sink into low-slung futon beds, your surrounds decorated with *washi* paper screens, bamboo closets, jewel-toned walls and deep tubs – the latter are hidden by frosted glass at the touch of a button. You'll also want to head to the 17th floor to soak in the spring-fed *onsen* – the water is therapeutic, and the views are phenomenal.

Location You can literally see where the emperor and empress live in their lush Imperial Palace grounds.

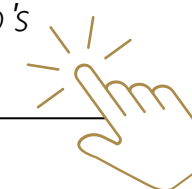
Best for Relaxation: there aren't many hotels in Tokyo that come with rooftop *onsen*, with water piped from mineral springs below the street.

Hot feature This place encourages you to ditch your shoes and walk around barefoot and in robes. ♦



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[Click here to read more about Tokyo's luxurious Timeless Temptations.](#)



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